

Resources

A reACTivism is your way of shouting the dangers of tobacco. It's your creative form of expression that gets them to take notice of the Big Tobacco lies. Are you ready to make some noise? Here's what you need to start causing a commotion.

And make sure you get permission from your principal, janitors, advisors and anyone else before beginning your reACTivisms. Also, practice makes perfect, so try out your reACTivisms several times before taking your fight to the public.

Clique

Show Corporate Tobacco that you're not interested in joining their clique. For this reACTivism, you will illustrate the different cliques that you choose between every day. Get your crew to dress like individuals from several different cliques represented in your school: got or emo, western, preppy, hippie, or choose your own. Find two pairs of pants which you can write on for this event. Setup the reACTivism area with the clothesline, jeans and other materials with the sign in the middle. Hang each pair of jeans on the provided clothesline using clothespins. Place one circular pack of candy in the back pocket of one pair of jeans. Using paint, trace the shape of the circular candy onto the outside of ONE of the pair of jeans' pockets to create a circle imprint in the back pocket, symbolizing smokeless tobacco cans. To show Corporate Tobacco that you don't belong to their clique, sign the jeans without the smokeless tobacco circle.

Drop Dead

Secondhand smoke kills too many people in Montana each year. Laws like Montana's Clean Indoor Air Act are making this number go down. But Corporate Tobacco companies aren't having it. They're promoting new smokeless tobacco products like snus and flavored spit tobacco to keep people addicted. Take to the streets with this quick and dramatic message. It can easily be executed on a street corner, at a sporting event or in the hallway at school. Just make sure to get permission and block off an area. First, create your own anti-tobacco signs and feel free to invent your own anti-tobacco messages. On the day of the event, a group of reACTors will step out into the blocked off area of the street and show off their posters. Give the audience an opportunity to read the sign. Then, on cue, the entire react group drops to the ground. Designate a group member to announce the main message and go over some talking points such as those below. You can try repeating this activity in different locations to get the message out to more people.

- For every 8 smokers who die, one non-smoker dies from secondhand smoke.
- There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Smokefree laws, like Montana's Clean Indoor Air Act, prevent teens from starting to smoke tobacco.
- Corporate Tobacco spends millions targeting teens in Montana as replacement smokers.

Trick or Treat

This will work great at a football game, at a festival or at school. But first make sure you get permission from all necessary officials. Set up a table and decorate it Halloween-style. Put out vials of several candy-flavored scents (candle scent oils work great) with corresponding scent label cards attached to the vials and place them facing your audience. First, grab a volunteer from the crowd then blindfold them. Ask your participant to smell each vial of scented flavorings and guess which flavor is which. As they make guesses, reveal the answer to your audience by flipping over the scent card. Before you take off the blindfold, ask your volunteer to pick their favorite scent. Explain that Corporate Tobacco uses these flavors to trick you into using tobacco- and to mask the harsh effects of their products. Take off the blindfold. Show the volunteer the flavor they picked and explain that Corporate Tobacco covers up its products with "fun" flavors and colorful packaging.

Tobacco and the Environment

Stretch out a long roll of paper through a large area, such as a school hallway. As you spread out the paper, write messages on the paper about the environmental impact of commercial tobacco production. Ask participants to write their own messages to Corporate Tobacco on the paper. Talk to participants about the environmentally-irresponsible actions of Corporate Tobacco.

Underground Newsletter

Distribute a monthly newsletter –include information from the Web site (to reach those students who don't have access to it – or who simply just don't know about it) as well as a calendar of current events, letters to the editor, ads (recruitment and cessation messages) and testimonials and tributes. To keep it cheap, give it an underground, hand-made feel. An Adult Advisor at your school should approve the newsletter before you publish.

Tribute Board

Ask teachers at your school to donate a portion of a chalk or bulletin board (preferably in a public place – like a hallway or cafeteria) to use as a tribute board. The tribute board will be an open forum for students to “speak out” by writing down how tobacco has affected them. The point would be to find a common ground among students. It is likely that many students know someone who has been hurt by the negative effects of tobacco use.

Variation: Use the board space to post open-ended questions about the ethics of Big Tobacco. You’ll want to encourage discussion, rather than persuade students to form a particular opinion.

4-A-Day

This commotion uses the shocking statistic that four Montanans die every day from tobacco-related diseases. Decide on a personal item to physically represent the statistic. Ideas include shoes or nametags that say “father”, “mother” and other family titles. Each day, four more of the item will be added to a display in a public area to represent the people who die every day as a result of tobacco use. The accumulation would be four a day, 28 a week, 112 a month and 1460 a year. The idea is to make people aware of the statistic by showing them not only the cumulative effect over the course of several weeks or months – but to also remind them that the victims aren’t just numbers. This could be paired with the tribute board.

Variation: For a shorter-term display, display larger items outside the school for a great opportunity for free press.

Guessing Game

More people die from tobacco-related diseases than from car accidents, alcohol, drugs, AIDS, suicides and murders combined. Fill display jars with marbles or other small items proportionate to the following statistics:

16 – Number of people in US who die each day from cocaine, crack heroin and morphine use

117 – Number of people in US who die each day from car accident

38 – Number of people in US who die each day from AIDS

129 – Number of people in US who die each day from alcohol (includes drunk driving)

1,315 – Number of people who die each day from tobacco related causes (including secondhand smoke)

Ask students to identify what cause of death is represented by the number of items in the jar, and submit their guesses into a ballot box. Display the correct answer or announce them over the loudspeaker. Give a great gear item to the winners.

Barn Art

Corporate Tobacco companies have used barns as space for advertising for years. They offer to paint the barn for the farmer and in exchange they get cheap advertising. Take this concept and turn it around to use barns as anti-tobacco message centers and get your art in the public eye. All you'll need is some creative vision and someone who will let you paint their barn.

What Makes You Cool?

Hang a large sheet at school or in the community. Let other students write what makes them cool or unique – but don't let them know it's part of an anti-tobacco message. Offer a gear item as an incentive to participate. At the end of the day, make a simple announcement and list some of the best reasons for being cool. Then note that smoking was not listed as any of the reasons.

Brands

Set up a fake "branding" station in your cafeteria or commons area. Include a booth with fake branding irons. Perform a mini skit by rounding up kids like cattle and "branding" them as their property. Demeaning adjectives from Big Tobacco memos such as "stupid," and "easily manipulated" can be used as brand tags. Then make the point that Big Tobacco does this without teens noticing. Hand out reACT gear and information during the event.

Tombstones

Pick an empty rural stretch of road and time out a pattern of tombstones so that a driver (going the speed limit) sees a tombstone along the road every time a person either in the U.S. or Montana dies from tobacco products. At the end of the stretch, space out a couple of signs explaining what the driver saw.

Donate a Pack

Organize a drive in your school (possibly expanded to the community) and ask for kids and community members to donate the cost of one pack of cigarettes. At the end of the drive, make an announcement about how much money was raised and what the money is equivalent to (i.e. smoking a pack a day for a year). Use the money raised to do something positive for your school.

Nuclear reACTor

Turn your school into a “Nuclear reACTor” or a center for tobacco awareness for a day. Cover the school in the reACT signature red and black; post signs, hang up locker magnets and hand out reACT gear.